

Meeting Date: July 24

Agenda Item No. 9

Agenda Item: Review of Hunter Orange Policy

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Sharon W. Kiefer

Background:

The role of hunter orange in hunting safety has been a previous topic considered by the Commission in both legislative and administrative forums. Currently, the Commission does not have a formal policy about the use of hunter orange.

Staff was contacted by a few Clearwater Region legislators and constituents in summer 2007 to discuss the utility of hunter orange, use of hunter orange in nearby states, use of hunter orange in Department programs and rules, and the Idaho legislative background of hunter orange. There was recognition that use of hunter orange serves a social purpose, not a specific biological purpose for wildlife management. There was no request for the Department to sponsor hunter orange legislation but there was desire to understand the Commission position about hunter orange to serve as a foundation for further legislative and public policy discussion by citizen advocates with their legislators.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues:

The Commission has statutory authority to set the conditions of public use of Department lands in 36-104(b) and 36-104(7). Based on these authorities, the Commission previously adopted a rule in 13.01.09.300 for wearing hunter orange when hunting on WMAs where pheasants are stocked. This rule has been legislatively approved.

As a matter of policy, the Commission has supported the Department ensuring use of hunter orange for Department-sponsored activities such as mentored youth hunts, teaching safety messages that incorporate hunter orange in hunter education, providing general information to the public about the safety benefits of hunter orange, and the encouragement of voluntary use of hunter orange in the appropriate conditions.

Public Involvement Process:

A limited discussion has occurred with legislators and a small group of interested hunters in the Clearwater Region.

Staff Recommendation:

Consider development of policy statements about hunter orange that may be used in legislative and public policy discussions. A draft "Statements of Policy Regarding Hunter Orange" is attached for Commission review and discussion.

Justification:

A request for a Commission policy about hunter orange has been made by a group of interested legislators and constituents.